

Washington, DC - Congressman Jeff Fortenberry has joined Congresswoman Stephanie Herseth Sandlin (D-South Dakota) to help introduce the Rural Energy Equity Act that expands opportunities for wind energy production in rural America. Fortenberry and Herseth Sandlin also sponsored the legislation last year.

“Wind energy can help create a more sustainable energy future for America,” Fortenberry said. “Nebraska, along with other states across the Midwest, has great potential in harnessing energy from the wind. Public policy should play an important role in encouraging wind power and other clean energy technologies. This legislation makes construction of wind projects easier by repairing an inequity in the income tax code.”

“Wind energy is abundant across the Great Plains and can play a critical and increasing role in moving America towards energy independence,” Rep. Herseth Sandlin said. “This bill will make it easier – and more financially attractive – to invest in community wind and other local energy projects, serving not only to move our country toward greater energy security, but to encourage economic development in rural communities in South Dakota and across the country.”

Under current law farmers can receive grant and loan guarantees for community wind and other locally-owned energy projects under the Rural Energy for America Program (REAP). They often partner with wind developers to finance these projects. The developers are eligible for the federal Production Tax Credit for financing wind projects, but the credit is reduced if the project involves grants or loan guarantees from REAP. This legislation allows wind producers to be eligible for the full tax credit regardless of whether REAP funding is involved in the project.

A member of the House Agriculture Committee, Fortenberry has sponsored several initiatives for alternative energy development in rural America.

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